

June 29, 2018

VIA ECFS

Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Notice of *Ex Parte* Presentation, *Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 160(c)*, WC Docket No. 18-141

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On June 27, 2018, Daniel P. Friesen, Co-Founder, IdeaTek Telecom and the undersigned from INCOMPAS met with Chairman Pai and Jay Schwarz, concerning the above-referenced proceeding.

In the meeting, Mr. Friesen explained that IdeaTek focuses on building out fiber to home and small businesses and providing innovative technology services for underserved areas in rural Kansas, with plans to invest even more significantly in the underserved rural telecommunications market in the coming years. IdeaTek and its predecessor together have deployed 2,200 miles of fiber optic routes. Mr. Friesen discussed how his company provides schools and community colleges, as well as small businesses, with broadband services, including in areas where there are no other broadband providers. He also discussed how his company brings high paying, skilled jobs to the rural communities where his company is present.

Mr. Friesen emphasized that continued access to unbundled network elements is crucial to his ability to continue to provide, and expand, these vital services in unserved and underserved areas. In particular, he focused on his use of the unbundled dark fiber interoffice transport explaining that he uses this unbundled network access to connect communities together. This is crucial to connecting many rural unserved areas and competitive service expansion. He also discussed the fact that his company is privately funded and unsubsidized.

INCOMPAS and IdeaTek emphasized that there are numerous other fiber builders like IdeaTek across the county. These companies are providing broadband services in rural areas, sometimes where they are the only broadband provider. They also have a presence in urban areas where they provide more cost effective, customized, and innovative services than offered by the incumbent and cable companies (where present). These companies leverage unbundled network elements in key places while they are entering a market and building out their fiber

networks. We also noted that they still face significant barriers to entry in a number of locations. The executives of these small businesses are part of the communities they serve and are passionate about bridging the digital divide and bringing more innovative services in all areas.

Consistent with the Commission's goal of expanding broadband deployment, the Commission should dismiss USTelecom's petition outright and focus, first, on removing existing barriers to deployment and reject the USTelecom's attempt to cut off competitive fiber builders and their customers.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Karen Reidy

Karen Reidy
Vice President, Regulatory

cc: Chairman Pai
Jay Schwarz